FACTS FOR TEA DRINKERS.

Seventy-Five Million Pounds Imported Annually for Home Consumption.

From the New York Express.

It is hardly two hundred years ago when John Locke, the philosopher, wrote to his friend Limborch, then in Holland: "I want the best tea, even if it costs forty florins a pound; only you must be quick, or we shall lose this opportunity, and I doubt whether we shall have another." Now the importation and the consumption of the stimulant is reckoned by the million pounds. Thus much for not alone the advance made by commerce, but also for the widespread custom of tea-drinking. The demand in this country for tea is growing larger every year, and the habit of drinking it has become all but universal. Our close relations to China and Japan favor the importation of the commodity, and our merchants are quite willing to foster the rather injurious custom to the repletion of their pockets. A reporter for the *Express* called upon Mr. A. A. Low of the firm of Low Brothers, at Burling slip, and, after several questions, elicited the following information: "We import into this country," said Mr. Low, "about 85,000,000 pounds of tea each year. It has become one of the chief importations of this country, and as the population grows the consumption of tea becomes greater. Within the past five years the importations have increased about 500,000 pounds each year, and the prospects are that the amount of leaf consumed will become larger and larger as the years speed by. The greater portion of the cargoes of tea are landed at San Francisco or at the larger Californian ports, and then are transported across the country to New York, from whence the tea is distributed all over the land. The Eastern people are less of tea-drinkers than those who live in the West. This apparently unaccountable fact is due to the presence of lime in almost all the water which is furnished to the large cities for domestic purposes, and the people have ascertained that the use of tea will neutralize to a great extent the action of the lime upon the stomach.

CHINA THE MAIN SOURCE.

"We obtain most of our tea from China proper, a large quantity from Japan, the better quality from the Island of Formosa, and a small quantity of fermented tea from India. The Chinese tea is the popular favorite more because of its cheapness than because of its quality. The Formosian tea is very fine. It was only a few years ago when the Island of Formosa was opened, and it was immediately found that the first crop of tea obtained from there was the best ever imported into this country. Tea needs a virgin soil, and that it had in Formosa. It is not like the grape or other stimulant growing plant which needs long cultivation to reach its highest standard of excellence, but it demands that the ground be fresh and rich. In Japan the tea plant has a smaller leaf and a very delicate flavor. This is, of course, speaking very generally, because every plantation has its distinctive crop, and the plants of one section are very distinctly marked from those of another. I can tell by the simple flavor of the leaf within ten miles of the place where it has been grown. In all probability, after America, England claims the largest quantity of tea—but the leaf which the English people affect is the fermented one. The tea leaf is heaped in the plantation, and water poured upon it; then, by the action of the heat of the sun, the leaves become slightly decomposed, and consequently fermentation sets in. The tea is then taken, rolled, and burnt. The fermented tea has a very peculiar flavor. It is not pleasant, I think, to taste, at least the Americans do not care for it, as the taste is pungent, sweet, and sometimes sickening. It is used in this country more for the purpose of mixing with green tea than for any other purpose. Its influence in this mixture is to give the larger quantity a sweetish flavor that is relished by the Western people especially. In England, and perhaps throughout the Continent, the fermented tea is very much liked. The reason for this peculiarity of taste is due, in all probability, to custom rather than choice.

INDIAN TEA.

"The Indian tea is all of the fermented kind bought the most eagerly in England. Out of the 75,000,000 pounds of tea imported by this country only about 1,000,000 pounds are used here. This tea very rarely comes to this country directly, it usually comes here by way of England. The value of all kinds of tea is regulated, as a matter of course, by its quality; but the Indian growth is less expensive than the others. I am of the opinion that the failure which it has met with when its merchants have endeavored to force it into this market is due greatly to the firm hold the green and black teas have obtained on the Americans. Almost two-thirds of all the tea imported into this country is green, while the remainder, with the exception of a few hundred thousand pounds, is black. The prices of tea cannot be determined upon, because they fluctuate and are very seldom stable. The value of tea this year is, however, considerably less than it has been for a considerable time.

"The first invoice of tea is, of course, the most valuable, and considerable rivalry is occasioned between the English and American merchants in their endeavors to land the first cargo in this country. The tea is made more valuable than profitable, however, as the expense of rapid transportation and the high prices demanded at the plantations run the profits down to a very narrow margin. I think that the tea trade will increase by degrees until the price for it becomes almost nominal. There is great competition, and this, of course, brings the price down very low. Should a company be formed, however, the price would rise and the trade become a monopoly. The main reason for the continued standard price, is because transportation to this country is very high, and tea, although light in weight, takes up a great deal of room. Tea is taking the place of coffee to some extent, and may eventually do so entirely."

Bermuda Grass in the South.

Seventy years ago my father lived one mile and a half from Powerton, Ga., on the road thence to Greensboro. The house and kitchen yard were about 100 yards from the road, and two acres intervening between the yard gate and the outer gate. The yard was near an acre, set with young forest growth, except on the northeast corner, where no trees grew.

About April, seventy years ago, my father returned one evening from Sparta, after serving as Grand Juror. Horseback was the only style of travel in those days, with saddle bags for his wardrobe. He had been gone a long time, three days and two night's, to attend court; and stayed until it adjourned. A long journey, thirteen miles. A great accession and a grand business. All glad to see him, just at night, wife, mother and children. I was one of these; I remember it well; just 11 years old.

In he came, saddle bags on his arm, sat down saddle bags between his feet, said court was over, began to draw the strap with the brass hasp that closed the open edge of the bags at the middle. We stood around, on tiptoe, to see what would come out. A ginger cake, we thought, but dare not ask. One would be a thrip, two for seven pence, and four for pistereen. Yes, four, we thought; there were four of us. But no, the saddle bags opened, out came a paper bundle about the size of a quart pot.

Here, said pa to ma, is a wonderful thing for the yard, Bermuda grass." A friend gave me the roots. Here they are, and we will set the yard and need no more mats. This was the first of Bermuda grass in that region, seventy years ago. It was not seen or heard of before. It was new to every one.

Next day the ploughs were set going in the yard, ploughing and cross ploughing. The ground was then raked over and checked with a scooter, two feet each way, and one sprig put in each check most carefully.

It all grew readily, and in two years it covered the yard and was feeling its way to the garden in the rear, and the big gate on the road. There was no stopping it. Cattle, hogs, and sheep would carry it in their feet everywhere they went.

For the next four years I observed the progress of Bermuda grass. I then had never seen it elsewhere, but since have reason to believe that about this time it had been introduced in Greene, Oglethrope and Wilkes counties.

In 1817, sixty-four years ago, I went to Franklin college. Dr. Findley died, and I was transferred to South Carolina college, Columbia. Coming home at intervals, I noticed the progress of Bermuda grass at and around my father's house.

In December, 1819, I returned from college, this grass had taken possession of my father's plantation, had gone into the public highway, and was moving toward Powelton and Greensboro. This was sixty years ago, and eight years from the time it was brought to my father's house.

I have not seen that locality since. The people there can advise you, but from what I have seen and heard, it has possession to the Savannah river, to Thomson, on the Georgia railroad, and to the Chattahoochee west and north.

In 1826, fifty-five years ago, I began housekeeping in Eatonton, Ga., on the lot now occupied by Mr. Edmund Reid. The house fronted to the court house on the street from the church to Milledgeville, seventy-five yards from the south of this street. The garden then was where now is a commanding grove of forest trees, but then a rich ground plentifully stocked with best vegetables, and not a tree in it.

Between the house and street, about a rod from the front door, was a small gate opening into the garden.

From the door to the gate was a foot way, well set with Bermuda grass, about half a rod wide. There was no other such grass in the vicinity, and this only a rod by half a rod."

It must be destroyed, we said, or lose the garden; and we went at it with shovel, grubbing hoe, and rake in the spring. It was dug to the bottom, the roots carefully separated and put into a wheelbarrow and wheeled into the street.

It required several days. It was carefully raked over and leveled.

We looked at it with satisfaction, believing it was all killed. But in September following it came up as thick as wheat.

Not discouraged, we repeated the work next spring, putting every spadefull of earth through a sieve, and the roots into a wheelbarrow, and then into a fire in the kitchen—kept up for that purpose, because what we put in the street grew finely and was coming at us from that point.

We completed the job, and felt sure we had a triumph. But next season it came up again as thick as wheat. We gave it up, as it was now entering into the garden.

We then ploughed it up and set the ground up in all manner of forest trees, not excepting old field pines, sweet gum and maple, elm, etc. From this, this grass took Eatonton and Putnam county. It now covers all the adjacent counties.

Fifty years ago, Mr. J. L. Moody, a thorough cultivator, lived on the Wade farm six miles from Madison, on the road to Eatonton. Bermuda grass got a set in his lane, between two fields of choice land. He was a man of strong purpose and determined will, and had ample men and horse power, and resolved to exterminate it. He ploughed, hoed and raked it up, and hung it up on the fence and stumps and stakes, so that at midday it made one feel as if the shades of evening or the long moss that hung upon the trees on the Florida line were about him. Moody thought he had killed it, but next spring it took the field.

Forty years ago I passed. Moody had left. The plantation was in Bermuda grass, and a waste, while a good two-story brick mansion looked like a deserted castle.

During the war I removed from Etowah to Athens, and Wilkes County, I found this grass in possession from Chattahoochee River to Augusta on that line; also from Atlanta to Macon and Columbus, and from Columbus to Newman.

I have not observed it in Cherokee, Ga. It would be sad to see it here, as this section is now ruined and impoverished by cotton and guano. Clover, rye, and pea vines are the rescue These will not stand with Bermuda. Without these and a change of crop products the country will be handed over to "Bermuda," and the present owners must leave.

Middle Georgia is its place, climate and soil. It needs a warm climate. Very cold weather kills it. It retires from a dense forest covered with leaves, and goes to sunny places.

It is self-sustaining, will live in stony ground and thin soil. Luxuriates in rich land, and in wet places. It sods in a quagmire so that you may walk over on it. It will cross small streams, grow in the water, and dam them up. It will hold up railroad embankments, and live and grow on the bare, naked red clay hills, cross and fill up the gullies, making on the clay in its innumerable fibrous roots a rich black mold to feed on. It is the best for cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs to graze on. They prefer it, and the hoof does not hurt it. It is the first in spring and last in fall, but the upper growth dies in winter.

A moderate crop of corn or cotton may be made where it is by determined purpose and power enough.

Best means to distroy a small quantity: Feed and fatten 100 hogs on a quarter of an acre from the 1st of September to the 25th of December. They will kill it. The grass may have its time to live and period to die. I so, I have not lived long enough to know it. I have never seen its blossom or its seed.—*Mark A. Cooper, in "Dixie Farmer."*

A LADY barber of Homer, Illinois, has shut up shop to marry a wealthy farmer with whom she scarped up an acquaintance, and may be expected to razor quota of little shearers to help the world along. She is said to be young, handsome and accomplished.